

entation of the first-line supervisor so that he can effect his role in recognition, confrontation and referral and (3) the presence of a medical and counseling capability within the organization to bring about extramural referral and treatment along with supportive counseling during the period of newly attained sobriety.

Labor, management, the federal government, the Armed Services and other major groups have established policies and have created mechanisms for the identification and treatment of alcoholic employees so that the 9,000,000 alcoholics in the United States can be retained in, or returned to, gainful employment. Concerned practitioners working in occupational medicine or acting as consultants to commercial or manufacturing organizations can aid an employer in rehabilitating potentially productive workers whose illness now costs American industry more than \$12 billion a year.

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## Effect of Noise: Psychosomatic Reactions to Acoustic Shocks

NOISE is defined as any unwanted sound. Prolonged exposure to noise eventually can produce measurable hearing loss. Noise also may produce physiologic changes: dilation of the pupils, increased pulse amplitude and rate, impairment of sleep, annoyance reactions, startle reactions and manifestations such as nausea, headache, irritability, instability, anxiety and loss of appetite.

Very loud noise of short duration is called impulsive noise and is exemplified by the sound of gunfire. This type of noise is more likely to result in a severe startle reaction, especially if not anticipated, and may result in more than the usually measurable physiologic body responses.

A case in point involves a middle-aged telephone operator who was startled by a loud noise when she plugged into a telephone line. There was an immediate outcry, and a prompt loss of consciousness. Upon arousal she had pain and tinnitus in the ear, nausea, vomiting, diaphoresis and severe anxiety. This person never returned to her job. She developed a profound fear of

telephone equipment (conversion hysteria?) and required continuing (lifelong) psychiatric care.

Acoustic shocks in the telephone industry may occur in flurries. One operator at a bank of switchboards may be a victim of impulsive noise on the line and the person's outburst often results in similar responses in co-workers soon after. In some instances these employees must be transferred to other work because they become extremely apprehensive and report acoustic shocks frequently and in rapid succession, although the equipment is found to be in excellent working order.

Noise is of considerable concern to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and its counterparts on the state level, as it is to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the community at large.

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## Degreaser's Flush

TRICHLORETHYLENE (TCE) is one of the most widely-used industrial solvents, serving as an effective degreasing agent for metal parts in addition to other uses. Recent observations of persons repeatedly exposed to TCE vapor showed the sudden occurrence of a blotchy, red eruption a few minutes following the ingestion of moderate amounts of ethanol. The vasodilatation of small blood vessels involves bilateral and fairly symmetrical areas of the face, neck, chest and back, and occasionally also the extremities. The erythema, while embarrassing to the worker, is not accompanied by unusual subjective responses. Blood pressure, pulse and findings on electrocardiogram, complete blood count, urinalysis and SMA-12 panel are within normal limits. The condition usually subsides in a few hours.

This response to TCE vapor has not been recognized before, and has eluded satisfactory explanation. While apparently quite harmless, degreaser's flush requires further study.

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